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AUTHOR Bunton, Peter L.; Weissbach, Theodore A.
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ABSTRACT

An attempt was made to assess both the differences in self-concept and racial preference between children who had or had not been exposed to a community-oriented school program, and to examine the change in racial preferences and self-concepts of children before and after exposure to a community-oriented school. Two groups of subjects were used. The first group consisted of 44 black children in kindergarten and first grade attending a predominantly black public school. The second group consisted of 21 black children in kindergarten attending a community-controlled school. Both groups were asked to indicate their preferences for different race dolls. It was hypothesized that children not exposed to the community school program would prefer less frequently and identify less with dolls of their own race than children who were exposed to the program. The data supported the hypothesis. (Author/BW)

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ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACKNESS OF BLACK PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN ATTENDING COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED OR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Peter L. Bunton and Theodore A. Weissbach
Pomona College

CG 007 609

How people perceive themselves is one of the oldest questions in psychology. Cooley (1902) suggested that the way a person perceived himself was a consequence of how others saw him. "The thing that moves us to pride of shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind" (Cooley, 1902, p. 152).

Largely on the basis of studies which employ the Clark and Clark (1947) "doll preference" paradigm (or very similar methods), evidence has accumulated to indicate that many black children have a negative self-image (Asher and Allen, 1969; Goodman, 1952; Greenwald and Oppenheim, 1968; Morland, 1962). The major finding of these studies is that both black and white children are very likely to reject representations of blacks in favor of whites. It is widely accepted that the basic reason for rejection of blacks is the negative affect felt toward blacks by the adult society. Whites adopt this negative affect quite early in life (Allport, 1954) from parents and culture. Black children acquire negative affect toward their race and themselves both through adoption (parental attitudes) and direct contact with life experiences which reflect a negative image (Rainwater, 1966).

Yet, recent studies (banks, 1970; Caplan, 1970) indicate that attitudes of adult blacks toward their own race have become more favorable. And, in one case at least, despite the dire predictions of Pettigrew (1967), black children in an integrated setting appear to hold less negative attitudes toward themselves than had previously been the case (Hraba and Grant, 1970).

Despite increase school integration, many (if not most) black children remain in segregated schools, primarily in urban ghettos. It is these same ghettos which appear to be the focus of black protest and which are most likely to contain adult blacks whose attitudes reflect the changes detailed by Banks (1970) and Caplan (1970) -- increased racial awareness, pride in race, independence from white control, etc. In some black communities, one of the outgrowths of change has been community-oriented and/or - controlled schools. In some areas, these schools have been run by militant organizations (e.g., the Black Panthers) while in other areas, more conventional groups are responsible for school programs. Among the multiple goals of such schools have been improvement of self-concept through emphasis on racial pride.

The purpose of this study was to attempt to assess both the differences in self-concept and racial preference between children who had or had not exposed to a community-oriented school program, and to examine the change in racial preferences and self-concepts of children before and after exposure to a community-oriented school. Three predictions were made: (1) No systematic differences in racial preference or self-concept would be found between children who had not participated in (and were not scheduled to participate in) a community-controlled school and children who were just entering a community-controlled school. (2) Children who had participated, and (3) Children at the end of a semester's participation in a community-oriented shcool program would exhibit pro-black behavior more frequently than at the beginning of the program.

Method

Subjects. Two groups of subjects were used. The first group of subjects was 44 black children (24 girls and 20 boys) in kindergarten and first grade attending a predominatly-black public school in Pomona, California. The second groups was 21 black children (10 girls and 11 boys) in kindergarten attending a community-controlled school in the Anacostia section

of Washington, D.C. . Teachers in both schools reported that the children in both schools came from "working-class" homes.

Procedure. Prior to actual testing, Es spent some time in the classrooms participating in the normal programs and getting acquainted with their Ss. Four experimenters were used in each location: two black, two white, one of each race male and the other female. All Es were college students. On the day of the experiment, each S was brought individually to a small room away from class activities by one of the Es.

After insuring that S was reasonably relaxed, E placed four Creative Playthings puppets in front of the child)catalog #G250 and #G450). The puppets were two black and two white children; one of each race was male, the other female. The puppets of the same sex are identical except for color of skin, hair and eyes. Each S was asked to respond to the following series of requests:

1. Show me the puppet which looks best.
2. Show me the puppet which is dirty.
3. Show me the puppet which has a nice skin color.
4. Show me the puppet which is ugly.
5. Show me the puppet which you think is a good puppet.
6. Show me the puppet which is the Negro puppet.
7. Show me the puppet which is the white puppet.
8. Show me the puppet which is the Caucasian puppet.
9. Show me the puppet which is the colored puppet.
10. Show me the puppet which is the black puppet.
11. Show me the puppet which is like you.

The Pomona sample was tested once, approximately 12 weeks after the beginning of the fall semester. The Washington, D.C. sample was tested twice, at the beginning of the fall semester and approximately twelve weeks later.

Results

No significant differences between race of experimenter, sex of experimenter, nor sex of subject were found in this study. Thus, all results were pooled across experimenter and subjects within each of the two groups of subjects. In addition, items 6-10 indicated that, with the exception of Caucasian, the children knew almost unerringly which dolls

represented which racial group. Therefore, the remaining analyses presented will be concerned only with items 1-5 (responses to which indicate racial "preference") and item 11 (response indicates racial "identification").

Insert Table 1 about here

Although the Pomona and Washington, D.C. (prior to attendance at community-controlled school) samples are separated by about 2500 miles and are undoubtedly subject to different environments (suburban versus urban, for example), Table 1 indicates no systematic differences between them on the items of interest. Four of the six chi-squares are not significant. The significant relationship for item 1 indicates that the Washington, D.C. sample is more pro-black, while item 11 indicates the reverse is true. Therefore, despite whatever other differences might have existed between the two groups before the Washington, D.C. sample had been "treated" (attended the community-controlled school), the two appear to be roughly equivalent in terms of doll preferences.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 2 presents a comparison of the relative frequencies of doll preferences for the Washington sample, after exposure to the school program, and the Pomona sample. Where no systematic differences between samples were found prior to exposure, Table 2 indicates that the Washington sample after exposure gave a greater proportion of pro-black response than the Pomona sample on all six items. For five of the six items, the relationship between sample and doll preference is significant as tested by chi-square.

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 3 compares the Washington sample with itself. Again, all of the changes in relative proportions are in the predicted direction (toward more pro-black responses). Three of the six chi-squares for correlated proportions are significant (dirty, nice skin color, and like you).

Discussion

Within the limitations of the design (stimulus materials, Washington sample tested twice versus once for Pomona sample, regional differences, different examiners at the two locations) the results are consistent with the hypothesis that a "pro-black" school atmosphere can have a positive effect on the racial preference and self-concept of black youth as measured by the doll-study technique. It is not clear from this study whether the effect would generalize to other tasks and to non-classroom settings.

The behavior change observed in the Washington, D.C. sample may indicate a change in values (internalization), the desire to maintain a satisfying relationship with teachers (identification), or merely compliance in order to maximize positive and minimize negative reinforcement (Kelman, 1958). In order to test whether the behavior change also signifies an internal (attitude or value) change, it would be necessary to observe the children's behaviors in settings outside their school and under different reinforcement contingency conditions.

If the data are generalizable, then those black children still relegated to segregated schools could still anticipate development of a positive self-concept which included pride in their race. Since, under current policies, so many black children in urban settings will continue to attend segregated schools, and since the relationship between self-worth and academic performance appears to important (Coleman, et al, 1966; Katz, 1967; Pettigrew, 1967, 1969) programs which encourage self-worth in segregated settings need to be emulated.

Nothing in this study indicates that segregated as opposed to integration settings are more amenable to the development of a positive self-concept. Clearly, the data indicated only that given segregation, the environment can and should be conducive to positive self-worth. This should <u>not</u> be interpreted as an endorsement of segregated schooling. the data from other studies (c.f. Campbell and Schuman, 1968; Coleman, et al, 1966) are consistent -- most blacks wish to have both integration and black pride. And, it still appears that blacks may perform better in integrated than in segregated schools (Katz, 1967; Pettigrew, 1967) under conditions of true majority acceptance.

At the same time, black children isolated from personal, direct contact with whites may find the approval of other blacks more crucial for the development of their self-concept and academic abilitites than the approval of whites (Katz, 1967). If that is the case, the process of developing pride in black children in segregated settings becomes all the more important.

Table 1

Relative Frequencies of Doll Choices: Washington, D.C. (Pre) and Pomona

Item	Washington (Pre)	Pomona	X^2
Best			
Black	13	12	5.81*
White	8	32	
Dirty			
Black	10	37	.00
White	3	7	
Nice Skin Color			
Black	5	12	.00
White	16	32	
Ugly			
Black	9	28	1.73
White	12	16	
Good			
Black	7	9	.67
White	14	35	
Like You			
Black	8	30	4.13*
White	13	14	

Note — All chi-squares corrected for continuity.
* $p < .05$

Table 2

Relative Frequencies of Doll Choices: Washington, D.C. (Post) and Pomona

Item	Washington (Post)	Pomona	X^2
Best			
Black	18	12	17.26***
White	3	32	
Dirty			
Black	8	37	12.04***
White	13	7	
Nice Skin Color			
Black	14	12	7.62**
White	7	32	
Ugly			
Black	7	28	4.10*
White	14	16	
Good			
Black	12	9	7.15*
White	9	35	
Like You			
Black	17	30	.61
White	4	14	

Note -- All chi-squares corrected for continuity.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Table 3

Relative Frequencies of Doll Choices: Washington, D.C. -- Pre and Post

Item	Washington (Pre)	Washington (Post)	X^2
Best			
Black	13	18	3.20
White	8	3	
Dirty			
Black	18	13	8.10**
White	3	8	
Nice Skin Color			
Black	5	14	7.10**
White	16	7	
Ugly			
Black	9	7	.44
White	12	14	
Good			
Black	7	12	2.50
White	14	9	
Like You			
Black	8	17	7.1**
White	13	4	

Note -- Chi-squares for correlated proportions, corrected for continuity.

** $p < .01$

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